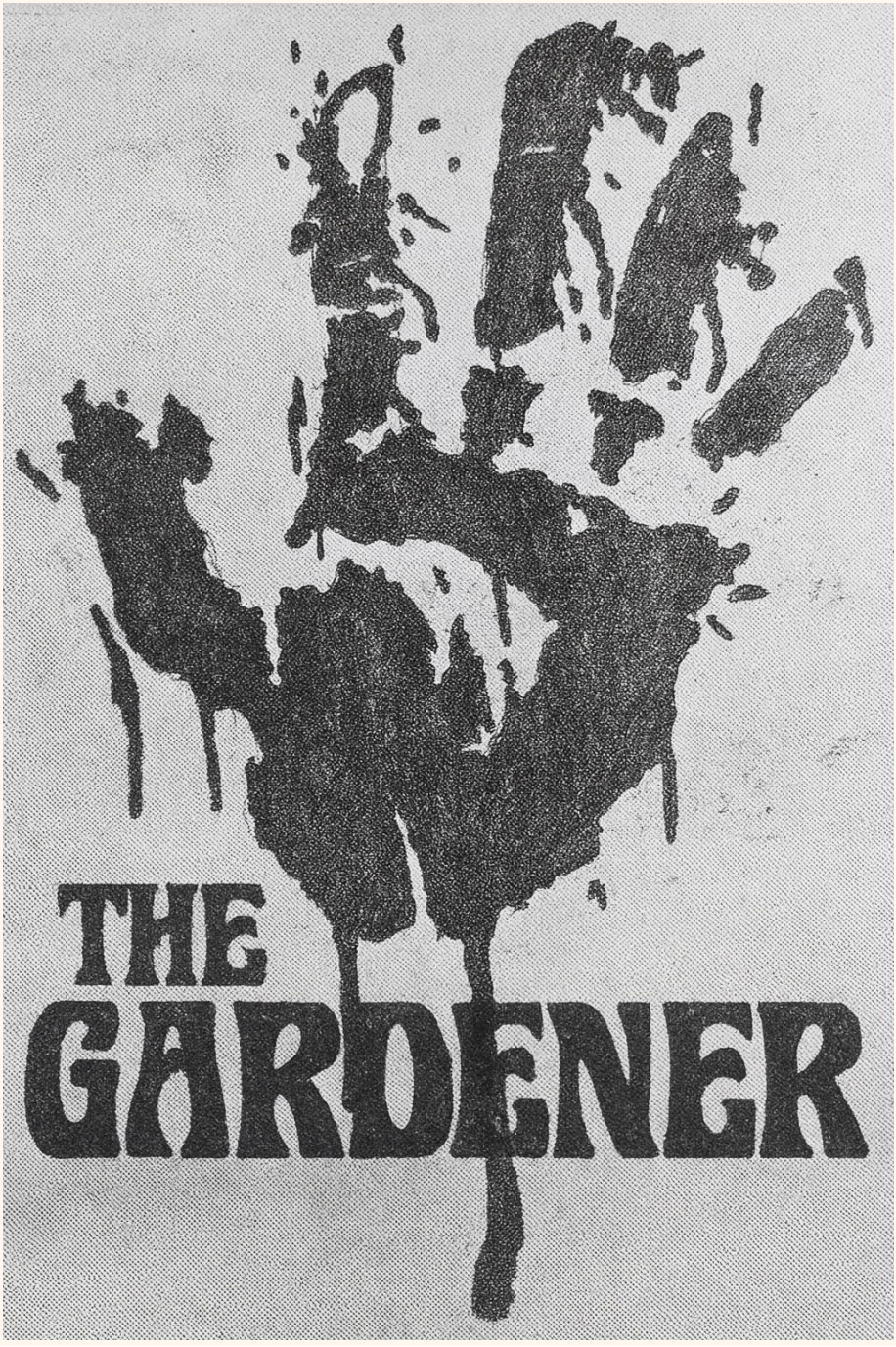
THE
GARDENER

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At age 60 he was living with his 83 year old mother in a small room she had in her home. He would occasionally ask for money from his three sons but doesn't any longer. He worked as a gardener at a rich family's home that his mother had known. She helped her son get this job. He had always been bouncing job to job his whole life.

While cleaning the lawn it was a very hot day. He noticed the 43 year old woman who owned the home walking out the front door. She had sunglasses on and was unlocking her car with the button on her keys. He stood and smiled at her. His smile always showed off his wrinkles. She smiled back but behind the shaded sunglasses was disgust. Resentment. He was a hard worker but that did not owe her the slight of respect for him. She hated the man for being old and a failure.

When men are young it's okay to have pity and even hope for them. There's always a chance, maybe, but once a man ages, every year dwindles. Sooner and sooner the respect along with sympathy begins to dry up. The world doesn't have much sympathy. Only a few people in his life felt bad for the old man these past couple years.

She drove away. He thought about going through her home just to look. He knew she would be gone for a couple of hours.

He went to the door. Entered the code and walked in. No one was home. In the entrance to the right was a library room that was the size of three living

rooms he had when he was a child. On the left was a piano inside the room. The room had tall ceilings and wide windows. It was quite beautiful.

He sat on the piano cushion. He imagined himself being talented on instruments. Playing for his family there while they congratulated his skills.

He touched the keys. He wasn't good. He sat there looking for sometime. Smiling at his ideas.

Happily he thought, maybe, I'll get a piano! no, a keyboard! And get really good. I'll make my mom smile. My kids might even be proud and listen to how talented their father is.

Then a noise happened at the door. The woman's son came in and immediately saw him. He was 19 and angry that afternoon. He hated the man. The gardener tried moving slowly due to the pain in his back. The boy went up to him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I was just taking a break," the old man said. "its hot outside."

"Can you even play anything on that thing?"

"No. But someday I really want to–"

"Hey! Do you ever think you're a waste?"

The old man looked at him confused.

"Like, to be your fucking age. Aging. Still mowing lawns. Living with your old ass mother? Don't you ever think, what a fucking waste you have to be? All those years just to be a garden worker?"

"Aging isn't a bad thing–"

"Really?! Really? You don't see anything wrong with the way you look, man? The way your life *looks*?"

the old man sat silent. He began getting up slowly.

"STUPID OLD FUCK!" the kid yelled.

He began shoving the old man and he fell on the piano on his side pressing the keys. The gardener was scared. The kid kicked him in the leg, his bad knee gave in and fell backwards. The kid began stomping him. Though the old man wanted to yell he couldn't. The kid couldn't stop himself and began stomping over and over the old man's face and chest. The old man let out tearless cries then his heart gave out from the blows.

The kid stopped with teared up eyes breathing heavily with a pinkish face. He ran upstairs to his room afterwards. The old man laid there dead with a crushed skull. There were little motions in his arms then they stopped. There was blood running from his mouth and nose. It began gradually puddling the floor.

The gardener still had many years he wanted to give. All those imaginations he wanted to see someday. But now, to be left stomped out with his mouth slightly open. The only thing he had to show at his death was the bits of teeth he still had remaining.